



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

April 13, 2006

RICK PERRY

GOVERNOR

Ms. Dorcas R. Hardy
Chairman
WHCoA Policy Committee
4350 East-West Highway, 3rd Floor
Bethesda, Maryland 20814

Dear Ms. Hardy:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the preliminary report of the 2005 White House Conference on Aging (WHCoA).

On April 1, 2005, I issued Executive Order RP 42, creating the Aging Texas Well Advisory Committee. This executive order should enhance efforts to prepare for an aging population. Many of the top WHCoA resolutions are similar to the ideas expressed in RP 42. These include the importance of supporting caregivers, the need for geriatric training among medical providers, the need for evidence-based disability and disease prevention activities, the importance of improving the provision of behavioral health services and support to older persons, and the vital nature of transportation services for older Texans.

As governor of a rapidly growing state, I am encouraged that one of the strongest goals of the WHCoA is improving long-term services and supports, particularly development of a national strategy. The costs of these services comprise an increasing share of many state budgets. As a nation, we must develop a comprehensive and coordinated approach to meeting these needs while ensuring appropriate fiscal control. As you are aware, a key component of this strategy is reauthorization of the Older Americans Act, the conference's top resolution.

We are proud that the Texas delegation to the WHCoA has been active throughout the entire process. Prior to the conference, they reviewed the resolutions and selected 24 of them as priority issues. The top 50 resolutions selected by the conference included all but one of these 24 priority issues (see attached). As part of our post conference follow-up activities, the Texas delegation is meeting on April 21 to discuss implementation strategies. They will also be meeting with their local communities during the month of May to report back on the conference and to identify implementation strategies at the local level.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the preliminary report. I look forward to reviewing the implementation strategies from the conference in your final report so that Texans may benefit from the innovative thinking of all the delegates.

Sincerely,


Rick Perry
Governor

RP:ncp

Enclosure